

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (d) The Cantonment Boards being Statutory bodies governed under the provisions of the Cantonments Act, 1924 undertake development works like roads, drains, water supply etc., from their own resources. Central Government provides only financial assistance to them by way of grants wherever needed. Service charges are also paid to them in lieu of property tax in respect of Defence properties. The Government has released to the Ranikhet Cantonment Board, an amount of Rs. 16,83,000/- in 1995-96 and Rs. 20,00,000/- during 1996-97 as special grants-in-aid for a scheme of conversion of dry type latrines into water borne.

[English]

Submarine 'Sindhu'

776. SHRI L. RAMANA :
SHRI SURESH PRABHU :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the submarine 'Sindhu' purchased from the Soviet Union have not been found upto the expected standard;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the major deficiencies detected in their performance; and

(c) the remedial steps contemplated by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Some submarines of the Sindhu Class were acquired from Russia between 1986 & 1990. These submarines have many distinct design features such as a long range sonar, superior hull design, under-water manoeuvrability etc. The shortcomings of the submarines related to our climatic conditions. These problems have been overcome by the Indian Navy through indigenous/inhouse efforts over the last few years.

Air Service to Rourkela

777. KUMARI FRIDA TOPNO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to provide air services to Rourkela to attract business houses for investment in that region;

(b) if so, whether the Airport Authority of India has any proposal to build an airport of International standard at Rourkela;

(c) if so, the details thereof including financial implications and the proposals before the Government to arrange the funds;

(d) whether the World Bank is likely to be approached for financial assistance in this regard; and

(e) if so, the time schedule thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Airlines are free to operate their services anywhere in the country subject to adherence to route dispersal guidelines as notified by DGCA from time to time.

(b) and (c) The airport at Rourkela belongs to the Steel Authority of India. Runway dimensions are 6000' x 100' suitable for operation of 50 seater class of aircraft. Airports Authority of India has no plans to upgrade the airport.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Czech Tank Deal

778. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russian Government are considering to review its stand on arms trading with Pakistan and a number of other countries if India sign the deal with the Czech republic for the purchase of 500 T-72 MI tanks as reported in the 'Indian Express' on May 22, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) No official communication has been received from Russian Government on this subject.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Cut in Import of Major Defence System

779. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the ways adopted of minimising the import of major defence system in our country;

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(b) the steps taken to enhance indigenous content in the defence system;

(c) whether any stipulation has been made in the area of defence technology between DRDO, the services, academy, R&D establishments and industry for development; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) A 10-year national mission has been launched for enhancing self-reliance in Defence systems with a goal of progressively reducing the import of Defence Systems to 30% of annual defence acquisitions by the year 2005. For this, a 3 pronged strategy has been adopted covering indigenisation of spares for the imported systems, upgradation of the Defence systems held by the Services and progressive induction of increased number of indigenously developed Defence systems and equipment.

(b) Large variety of materials, components and sub-systems have been developed indigenously for use in Defence systems.

(c) and (d) As a policy, major R&D programmes of DRDO are executed by making optimal use of expertise and infrastructure available in various sectors which include the academic institutions, R&D establishments and industry in private and public sector. Three research boards viz. Aeronautical Research and Development Board, Naval Research Board and Armament Research Board have been approved with funding to promote research in the critical technologies. During the execution of the programmes very close interaction is maintained with user services, who also participate in project reviews and meetings of monitoring bodies and management boards.

[Translation]

Supply of LPG through Private Companies

780. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private companies engaged in the supply of LPG to consumers;

(b) whether these companies are functioning satisfactorily;

(c) if not, the number of companies against whom the complaints of malpractices have been received; and

(d) the action being taken by the Government against them?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) As per the provision of the LPG Control Order 1993, private entrepreneurs import and market LPG at market determined price, under their own terms. Private parties are not required to obtain any licence from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for undertaking activities under the scheme. They are, however, required to obtain approvals/clearance under the relevant Acts and Rules regarding safety, pollution control, etc., as applicable. The private parties are also now required to get themselves rated from one of the approved rating agencies. So far 115 parties have obtained rating for supply of LPG to consumers under parallel marketing system. Cumulatively upto 30.6.1997, 18 parties have imported 236.8 TMT of LPG.

Some complaints were received against the parallel marketeers about non-refund of security deposit collected from the dealers/distributors, non-release of LPG connections, irregular supply of LPG refills, closure of operations, etc. The same were got investigated through the vigilance Cell of the Oil Coordination Committee (OCC) and the complainants were asked to take up the matter with Consumer Councils/MRTP Commission/Police etc. Some cases against the concerned parallel marketeers were also referred to the respective State Police Department for necessary action under the relevant law.

[English]

Marks in Hindi

781. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the percentage of marks in Hindi in CBSE examinations this year is too low in comparison to other subjects;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, and

(c) the corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA) : (a) As per information furnished by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), there has been no comparative decline in the marks obtained by the candidates in the subject of Hindi in relation to those obtained in other subjects in the examinations conducted by the Board in 1997.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.